head of libraries, Metropolitan Manchester University (UK).

Harris has written and consulted on “devolved budgeting” systems in the United Kingdom. Given that universities in Hong Kong are patterned on the British higher education system, Dr. Harris brought a valuable Commonwealth perspective to the IU team.

The initial phase of the project, which included interviews with over 40 senior administrators, produced important data on the existing infrastructure. In addition, key differences were revealed between Hong Kong and U.S. universities which might bear upon the costs and benefits of implementing RCM in Hong Kong. From the outset, the IU team’s goal was to present a balanced picture of the merits of RCM in a Hong Kong context.

In the second phase of the project, Patrick Rooney drafted a report that concluded RCM would assist the Hong Kong universities in better accounting for the internal costs of instruction and services. It concluded, however, that incentives for earning external income could best be enhanced if certain aspects of the Hong Kong higher education “market” were freed from regulations by the city’s authorities.

The conclusions of the report were presented in Hong Kong in a public forum to more than 120 officials from the participating universities. James Ng and his colleagues at the City University of Hong Kong organized and hosted the event.

Initially, only the City University of Hong Kong is likely to implement RCM. There is also interest in RCM at Hong Kong Baptist University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Other Hong Kong universities, however, are just now in the process of implementing “one-line budgets”—a precursor to RCM at IU—and want to gain experience with this before proceeding to more decentralized management systems. Nevertheless, one derivative of RCM, a “space allocation model” drew considerable interest among the participating universities because of the space constraints that universities must operate under in Hong Kong.

During both visits to Hong Kong, the RCM Task Force extended superb hospitality to the visiting members of the IU team. The IU participants also came away impressed with the energy and resources present at Hong Kong’s public universities, and with their genuine desire to establish closer relations with IU and other U.S. universities.

— Charles Reafsnider

SPEA Receives Grant to Launch MPA Program in Azerbaijan

The United States Information Agency announced, in November, the award of a three-year, $200,000 grant to fund a linkage program between Western University in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at Indiana University.

The idea for such a program was initiated by Randall Baker, SPEA’s director of international programs, during a visit to Baku last year. Following that visit, the rector of Western University, Goussein Bagirov, spent much of this past spring term as a visiting fellow to the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center (IAUNRC) at IU-Bloomington.

Last June, a delegation comprised of William Fierman, IAUNRC’s director, Charles Reasneyder, associate dean for international research and development, and Shawn Reynolds, director of the IU International Resource Center, traveled to Baku for further discussions with Bagirov. As a result of these meetings, IU signed a “Memorandum of Understanding” with Western University for cooperation in a wide variety of areas.

SPEA’s successful proposal to USIA for a linkage with Western University is the first fruit of this collaboration. Additional efforts at collaboration in business management training and English as a Second Language instruction are also being pursued.

The SPEA project is co-directed by Professor Baker and David Jones, SPEA’s director of professional graduate programs. During the three-year period, the SPEA project will fund an exchange of faculty between IU and Western to design and develop a Master’s in Public Administration (MPA) program that will be up and running by the end of the linkage. (Baker has previously been instrumental in establishing MPA programs in Bolivia, Spain and Bulgaria.)

A team has already been selected from the Azerbaijan side, and the project, which will commence in March, starts with that team spending a semester at SPEA. During that time they will visit several of the SPEA campuses, including South Bend and Indianapolis, to consider what is appropriate in terms of the orientation and content of this professional degree. Following that, faculty members from SPEA will travel to Baku to help in the design stage, and to launch some of the first offerings of the component courses.

IU has an impressive history of involvement in the Central Asian area, and the Azeri language is taught on the Bloomington campus. SPEA also has been involved in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan. Currently SPEA has a joint MPA program with Central Eurasian Studies for returned Peace Corps volunteers.

— EAB